

Sanitation Requirements in the Food Code for Processing Venison in a Retail Food Establishment

Use Approved Water System

- Verify your water supply is from a safe and approved source.
- Have well water tested annually, and keep a copy of the results on file.

Employee Health Requirements

- Prevent employees diagnosed with or having symptoms of an illness, wound or other affliction that might contaminate product from processing carcasses.

Protect Equipment and Utensil Food Contact Surfaces

- Check the condition of all food contact surfaces before and after processing venison, including cutting boards, knives, grinder, gloves, outer garments.
- Schedule routine cleaning and sanitizing of all food contact surfaces before and after processing venison.
- Conduct routine cleaning and sanitizing every four hours unless the processing room is refrigerated.

Prevent Cross-Contamination

- Separate raw and ready-to-eat foods, and prevent overcrowding in freezers, coolers, processing, & storage areas.
- Follow flow of venison throughout the store and design handling procedures to prevent cross contamination.

Keep Food Safe and Unadulterated

- Protect food, food packaging materials, and food contact surfaces from adulteration as a result of microbiological, chemical and physical contamination.
- Keep carcasses stored at 41°F to prevent decomposition and limit the growth of pathogenic bacteria found on the raw meat carcass.
- Protect exposed food from contamination:
 1. Condensate and floor splash (microbiological contamination)
 2. Fuels and lubricants (chemical contamination)
 3. Metal shavings from a grinder blade (physical contamination)

Protect, Label, Store and Use Toxic Compounds Properly

- Improper use of a toxic compound is a frequent cause of product adulteration.

Control Pests

- Exclude all pests from the storage and carcass processing areas.

How and When to Wash Your Hands

- Wash hands by vigorously rubbing together the surfaces of lathered hands and arms for at least 20 seconds and thoroughly rinsing with clean warm water.
- Wash hands before and after working with venison, and after eating, drinking, smoking, using the restroom, handling raw meat, touching hair, mouth, nose or face or wash any time your hands are unclean.

Hand Washing Facilities

- Provide handwashing sinks in both the processing and toilet room areas.
- Supply handwashing sinks with hand soap and paper towels.
- Keep toilet rooms clean and in good repair.

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Venison Processing



Processing Guide and Sanitation Requirements for Retail Food Establishments

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Checklist for Processing Venison in a Retail Food Establishment

Receiving & Inspection

- ❑ Processors must inspect all carcasses prior to accepting them from the hunter.
- ❑ Inspection of the carcass must be performed in a sanitary location with adequate lighting.
- ❑ Accept only carcasses which are:
 1. Free of signs of illness such as un healthy body condition (starved appearance or visible infections).
 2. Free of lumps or nodules in the chest cavity.
 3. Field dressed with the hide intact.
 4. Free of visible decomposition or contamination.
 5. Identified with owner’s name and proper DNR tag.

- ❑ Deer from Chronic Wasting Disease-positive areas* must be processed separately after all other deer.

Carcass Storage

- ❑ Carcasses with hides should be stored at 41°F or less in a secure manner, and be physically separated from all other food.

Note: Proper refrigeration is necessary to prevent decomposition and limit the growth of pathogenic disease-causing bacteria found on raw meat carcasses.

- ❑ Carcass handling and processing should be conducted using “first in, first out” rotation.

Head & Hide Removal

- ❑ Minimize handling and cutting of brain or spinal tissues and lymph nodes
 1. Use designated saw to remove antlers.
 2. Do not cut through spinal column except to remove head. Use a knife designated for that purpose that is maintained in a sanitary condition.
- ❑ Head and hide removal must take place in a dedicated area. It must be strictly segregated from food storage and handling such as outside or in a specialized room.
- ❑ Storage for all non-edible portions (hides, legs, heads) should not be inside the store. A secured, separate area that does not attract pests should be used.
- ❑ Heads, legs and other body parts, unless returned to hunter, must be disposed of in a licensed incinerator or buried in a licensed landfill.

Carcass Processing

- ❑ Wear intact rubber or disposable gloves in good repair. Promptly wash off any deer blood and saliva that comes in direct contact with your skin.
- ❑ Processing of hunter-owned deer must take place after all commercial food handling has ceased. There must be no way to cross contaminate other food.
- ❑ All processing and handling equipment, food contact surfaces, and floors in the shared food handling areas must be washed and sanitized immediately after processing. Processing of commercial foods cannot take place until this is done.
- ❑ Bone out meat from the deer, removing fat and connective tissue. This will also remove lymph nodes.
- ❑ Outer garments and aprons must be changed, washed and sanitized after processing venison.

Venison Product Storage

- ❑ Processors must implement procedures to maintain the identity of venison products so as not to confuse them with commercial meat.
- ❑ Processed hunter-owned venison should be wrapped and each package identified with the name of the owner. Packages should be stamped “Not for Sale.”
- ❑ Venison held for further processing (jerky, sausage, etc.) should be stored in covered containers, separated from commercial foods by a physical barrier and properly identified.

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Information for Processing

The abnormal proteins (called prions) thought to cause Chronic Wasting Disease are found in the brain, spinal cord, eyes, lymph nodes and spleen of affected deer and elk and potentially in blood and saliva. This guide has been revised to include procedures that minimize exposure to those tissues.

*Hunters importing a deer or elk from Colorado, Illinois, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, South Dakota, Utah, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming, Alberta, Saskatchewan, or other CWD positive areas, are restricted to bringing into Michigan only deboned meat, antlers, antlers attached to a skull cap cleaned of all brain and muscle tissue, hides cleaned of excess tissue or blood, upper canine teeth or a finished taxidermic mount.

Drawing collaboration between Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection and Michigan Department of Agriculture

